United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1450
5 August 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in letters to Member States, says United Nations is facing unprecedented financial crisis; appeals for payment of outstanding contributions, warning that vital operations are in jeopardy.

+ Co-Chairmen of Yugoslavia Conference propose to Bosnian Presidency and Bosnian Serb leadership that main roads in and out of Sarajevo be opened to everything but military material, to ease humanitarian crisis.

+ Commission on Human Rights sends team of experts to Croatia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to take up issue of disappearances.

+ World Food Programme to provide emergency food aid to 100,000 displaced persons in Lebanon; field assessment mission to determine needs tomorrow.

+ Special Representative in Cambodia protests broadcast by Party of Democratic Kampuchea radio encouraging Cambodians to prevent return of ethnic Vietnamese fishermen.

+ There is greater hope than ever before of a total nuclear test ban, says President of Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Conference on thirtieth anniversary of signing of Treaty.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has sent a series of letters to Member States drawing their attention to the financial crisis confronting the United Nations. He warned that unless substantial payments of outstanding contributions were made in the next month, the Organization would be unable to enter into new financial commitments, and existing operations would be jeopardized.

The Secretary-General sent one series of letters to the members of the Security Council -- France, New Zealand and the United Kingdom -- who had paid their contributions in full. He thanked them for their support and asked them

(more)

For information media--not an official record

to encourage other Member States to pay their contributions. He sent another set of letters to Council members who had not paid their contributions, calling on them to display them commitment to the United Nations by seeking to fulfill their obligations under the Charter. He also wrote to some 150 Member States with outstanding contributions describing the current financial situation as the most serious the Organization had ever faced and urging prompt payment of their contributions.

The Secretary-General noted in the letters that the United Nations had total cash reserves of $380 million and monthly expenses of $380 million. Outstanding assessed contributions to the regular budget and to peace-keeping operations totaled $848 million and $1,193 million respectively. Troop-contributing countries were owed $360 million, and it was becoming more difficult to pay for goods and services for peace-keeping operations. He also said that the Secretariat had been making every possible effort to economize, but no longer had room to manoeuvre.

A United Nations spokesman mentioned that while some countries had budget deficits and were experiencing economic difficulties, all Members States were Charter-bound to honour their obligations to the United Nations.

* * *

The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on Yugoslavia, Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, have proposed to the Bosnian Presidency and to the Bosnian Serb representatives that the main roads in and out of Sarajevo be opened to everything except military material, as a way of relieving the immediate humanitarian situation there. The spokesman for the Co-Chairmen described the proposal as a way of "reversing the strangulation of the people of Sarajevo".

In a statement issued today, he said that both sides had agreed to instruct their military commanders in today's meeting of the Mixed Military Working Group to enter into negotiations with a view to reaching an early agreement on the proposal. He pointed out that the process would have to be staged and subject to strict upholding of the ceasefire which all sides had signed.

* * *

Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on human rights in the former Yugoslavia, is sending a team of experts to Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) today to take up the issue of disappearances. The Commission had previously asked the Special Rapporteur to develop proposals for a mechanism to address the subject of disappearances, in consultation with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Working Group has been dealing with cases of missing persons in over 50 countries for more than 13 years.

(more)

The team of experts consists of Toine van Dongen from the Netherlands and two staff members from the Centre for Human Rights. Mr. van Dongen will visit Zagreb and Vukovar, in Croatia, and Belgrade, where he will meet with government officials and families of those who have disappeared. His recommendations will be taken into account in Mr. Mazowiecki's proposals on the subject of disappearances to be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its next session.

* * *

The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it will provide emergency food assistance to 100,000 people displaced by recent hostilities in southern Lebanon. Using stocks available in the country and local purchases, the WFP will provide 20,000 families with a total of 960 metric tons of food over the next 30 days.

The relief programme will be implemented through the Lebanese High Relief Commission and the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture. The Government of Lebanon has already released some relief assistance to the displaced populations but has appealed to the international community for further assistance. A field assessment mission will be conducted tomorrow to determine how much food is needed and for how long.

* * *

The Secretary-General's Special Representative in Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, has written to the leader of Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK) protesting recent broadcasts by the Voice of the Great National Union Front of Kampuchea, in particular a programme broadcast on 18 July, encouraging Cambodians to actively prevent the return of ethnic Vietnamese fishermen to the Tonle Sap area. Mr. Akashi referred to "the numerous calls to hatred and racial violence broadcast by your radio during the pre-electoral period, as well as the repeated attacks of the NADK (National Army of Democratic Kampuchea) against Vietnamese civilians". Considering those, he wrote, tne 18 July broadcast constituted official backing by the PDK leadership of the new wave of killings which had hit that community in the past three weeks.

The Special Representative said that the problem of the influx of Vietnamese work-seekers could only be resolved through the rejection of violence, careful analysis of the problem and adoption of appropriate laws. He warned the PDK that the attitude of the international community towards it in the coming months would "depend on its will to conduct itself in a responsible fashion".

* * *

There is greater hope than ever before of a total nuclear test ban, according to Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and President of the Amendment Conference of States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water. In a message marking the thirtieth anniversary today of the signing of the Treaty, he noted

(more)

the anniversary was special, but because for the first time since the signing, "silence reigns at nuclear weapon test sites".

Mr. Alatas said he would be convening a special meeting of the States parties to the Treaty on 10-11 August in New York to examine the feasibility of convening a second session of the Amendment Conference later this year. If it was the will of the parties to hold such a session, he would do everything in his power, he concluded, "to ensure that it will be a fitting and propitious occasion for the nations of the world to reaffirm the pledge enshrined in the 1963 Treaty to 'seek the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons in all spheres for all time'".

* *** *